

WASHINGTON POST
21 February 1986

U.S. to Reveal Nicaraguan Document

By Joanne Omang
Washington Post Staff Writer

The White House announced yesterday that it will make public Monday a declassified version of a document that allegedly outlines a "disinformation campaign" by Nicaragua to influence Congress and the U.S. news media.

Central Intelligence Agency Director William J. Casey was reported to have shown the document to Republican congressional leaders earlier this week, apparently to warn them about the reported campaign. Nicaragua has denied that any such document or plan exists.

Sen. David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.), chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, denounced the declassification move as an "outrageous" ploy by the White House to increase support in Congress for new financial aid to rebels fighting the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

"The administration clearly intends to use that document, an alleged plan by the Sandinistas, to lobby Congress, to portray every senator and congressman who votes against lethal aid as a stooge of communism," Durenberger said in a statement.

Durenberger has said he opposes military aid to the counterrevolutionaries, also known as contras. President Reagan is expected to ask Congress next week for \$70 million in covert military aid and \$30 million in nonlethal humanitarian aid for the rebels, who have been fighting since 1981 to overthrow the Sandinistas.

"The damage to our sources and methods of this transparent political tactic is bad enough, but the real betrayal is to the American people, who look to their senior leadership to live up to the responsibility to protect intelligence material from political exploitation," Durenberger said.

Jerry Berman of the American Civil Liberties Union said the decision to make the document public "is an effort to discredit people who oppose the administration policy in Central America." He said it is "a standard tactic that goes back to the McCarthy era but with a new guise, calling it disinformation instead of subversion or fellow-traveling."